

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LIMA 08313 080047Z

67

ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 8313

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PE

SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF PERUVIAN ARMY HELICOPTER TRAINING
SCHOOL

REF: LIMA MAAG MESSAGE DTG 022045Z OCT 75, LIMA 6811

1. PERUVIAN ARMY HAS ASKED MAAG FOR U.S. HELP IN ESTABLISHING
A SCHOOL TO TRAIN ARMY HELICOPTER PILOTS. ON BALANCE, I
FAVOR AN EARLY, POSITIVE U.S. RESPONSE. FOLLOWING ARE THE PROS
AND CONS AS SEEN FROM HERE.

2. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE, THE CONINUING CONGRESSIONAL BAN ON
U.S. PROVISION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO CHILE, AND THE
DIFFICULTY CHILE ENCOUNTERS IN OBTAINING EQUIPMENT ELSEWHERE,
MEANS THAT WHATEVER USG PROVIDES TO PERU NECESSARILY AFFECTS
THE MILITARY BALANCE WITH CHILE. I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT
PERU PLANS NO ATTACK, BUT THERE COULD CONCEIVABLY BE A
POINT WHERE PERU GAINS SUCH A PREPONDERANCE OF MILITARY
STRENGTH THAT IT FEELS COMPELLED TO USE IT AND REGAIN ITS
LOSSES IN THE WAR OF THE PACIFIC. ESTABLISHMENT OF A
HELICOPTER SCHOOL IN PERU MAY ENABLE THIS COUNTRY TO ENHANCE
ITS AIR-MOBILE CAPABILITIES EARLIER THAN WOULD OTHERWISE BE
THE CASE.

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PAGE 02 LIMA 08313 080047Z

3. ALSO, NO SETTLEMENTS HAVE SO FAR BEEN REACHED IN THE GULF

AND MARCONA CASES. BY QUICKLY AGREEING TO HELP WITH THE HELICOPTER TRAINING SCHOOL, THE U.S. MAY UNINTENTIONALLY SIGNAL THE GOP THAT IT CAN PUT OFF OR EVEN AVOID COMPENSATION.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, I AM CONVINCED THE PERIVIAN ARMY INTENDS TO ESTABLISH A HELICOPTER TRAINING SCHOOL HERE AND IS DETERMINED TO OBTAIN AN AIR-MOBILE CAPABILITY. THE ONLY QUESTION IS WHETHER THE U.S., USSR OR FRANCE WILL HELP.

5. THE KEY TO REDRESSING THE CHILE-PERU MILITARY BALANCE LIES IN ENABLING CHILE TO OBTAIN THE EQUIPMENT IT NEEDS. PERHAPS THE RECENT CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON MAP FOR TURKEY IS A HOPEFUL SIGN THAT THE BAN REGARDING CHILE WILL BE LIFTED.

6. U.S. HELP IN ESTABLISHING THE SCHOOL WILL PROVIDE AN OPENING TO THE PERUVIAN ARMY. THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE ARMY LEADS THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THERE IS NO FORESEEABLE ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENT IN THIS COUNTRY. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT BECAUSE UNTIL THE RECENT CHANGE IN THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT THE ARMY WAS THE MOST "STAND-OFFISH" OF THE THREE SERVICES, PROBABLY AS A MATTER OF POLICY. BUT ON SEPTEMBER 26, THE NEW MINISTER OF INDUSTRIES AND TOURISM, GENERAL IBANEZ O'BRIEN, A STAUNCH ANTI-COMMUNIST WHO IS WELL-DISPOSED TOWARD THE U.S., ASKED ME FOR U.S. HELP IN HELICOPTER PILOT TRAINING. IBANEZ O'BRIEN SAID PERU NEEDS HELICOPTER PILOTS FOR BOTH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN-TYPE OPERATIONS, AND THAT HE WOULD GREATLY PREFER THAT THE U.S. PROVIDE SUCH ASSISTANCE THAN ACCEPT THE PROFERRED SOVIET TRAINING ASSISTANCE FOR THIS PURPOSE. IT WOULD BE TOO BAD TO REJECT AN ARMY INITIATIVE TOWARD CLOSER MILITARY TIES TO THE U.S., PARTICULARLY AS THE PERUVIANS WOULD PROBABLY TURN TO THE SOVIETS, AS THEY DID FOR TANKS AND HELICOPTERS, OR THE FRENCH AS THEY DID FOR AIR FORCE HELICOPTERS.

7. CONCERNING MARCONA AND GULF, THE "ATMOSPHERE" OF IMPROVED U.S.- PERUVIAN RELATIONS, AND THE ASSURANCES OF PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ AND A NUMBER OF MINISTERS, LEAD ME TO BELIEVE THAT PERU WILL PAY COMPENSATION AND WILL SOON TAKE CONCRETE STEPS IN THAT DIRECTION. I BELIVE CONSEQUENCES
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PAGE 03 LIMA 08313 080047Z

OF FAILURE TO PAY COMPENSATION. THE MORE THOUGHTFULL ONES RECOGNIZE THAT SUCH FAILURE WOULD PROBABLY AFFECT NOT JUST MILITARY ASSISTANCE BUT U.S. COOPERATION ACROSS THE BOARD, AND PERU IS HARD UP ECONOMICALLY. THIS PROVIDES A POWERFUL INCENTIVE FOR A GOVERNMENT HEADED BY AN ECONOMIC EXPERT LIKE MORALES BERMUDEZ. U.S. HELP WITH THE TRAINING SCHOOL COULD ALSO FAVORABLY INFLUENCE THE COURSE OF THE MARCONA AND GULF NEGOTIATIONS.

8. IF THERE WERE TIME, I WOULD PREFER TO SEE CONCRETE ACTION REGARDING MARCONA AND GULF BEFORE THE U.S. AGREED TO HELP WITH THE HELICOPTER TRAINING SCHOOL. HOWEVER, I BELIEVE THAT IF WE DELAY, THE PERUVIANS WILL TURN TO THE SOVIETS. I THEREFORE BELIEVE WE SHOULD ACT NOW.

9. FINALLY, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT U.S. HELP IN ESTABLISHING A HELICOPTER TRAINING SCHOOL MIGHT LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES THROUGH THE FUTURE SALE OF HELICOPTERS.

10. I CONCLUDE THAT ON BALANCE THERE ARE MORE ADVANTAGES THAN DISADVANTAGES TO MEETING THE PERUVIAN ARMY REQUEST FOR HELP IN ESTABLISHING A HELICOPTER TRAINING SCHOOL. I RECOMMEND THAT WASHINGTON SO AGREE, AND SOON.
DEAN

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